

Institutional Program Evaluation Policy

June 2005

Adopted by Board of Governors on June 13, 2005

Modifications to reflect changes in
Academic Administration (pages 3, 4, 5)

Adopted by Board of Governors on February 6, 2006

1. INTRODUCTION

The Mission Statement of Dawson College commits the College “to maintain standards of academic excellence essential to our students’ future success and to provide the appropriate programs, services and technology to ensure that any student admitted has the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to achieve these standards.”

An essential activity in meeting that commitment is the evaluation of the academic programs offered by the College.

This document describes the policy framework within which these evaluations are carried out. The document also satisfies the requirements of Article 24 of the College Education Regulations (1993).

2. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Program Evaluation Policy is to ensure that such evaluation is undertaken in a manner that:

- is appropriate to the program being evaluated;
- is rigorous;
- acquires relevant, quality information;
- uses a methodology that allows sound conclusions to be reached and credible judgments to be made;
- respects ethical standards appropriate to an evaluation process;
- takes into account the efforts and opinions of major stakeholders;
- is useful and timely in providing realistic proposals that contribute to improvement of the program;
- is conducive to the development of a culture of continuous evaluation.

3. DETERMINATION OF PROGRAMS TO BE EVALUATED

The following factors will be taken into account in determining which programs are to be evaluated:

- 3.1.** A major change is planned or has occurred in the factors which affect the program (e.g. the industry or field addressed by the program).
- 3.2.** A major change is planned in the mode of delivery or clientele of the program.
- 3.3.** Information system data or ongoing evaluation results (e.g. application, retention and graduation rates) raise questions with respect to the viability and/or integrity of the program.
- 3.4.** Student feedback indicates problems in the program.
- 3.5.** The Program Committee requests an evaluation.
- 3.6.** The Dean responsible for the program or the Academic Dean requests an evaluation.
- 3.7.** The Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial requires the evaluation of a specific program.
- 3.8.** A new or revised program has completed one cycle.

4. SCOPE OF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

The scope of the evaluation will be determined as a function of the reasons prompting the College to conduct the evaluation (see Section 3). The evaluation will examine:

- issues specific to the program;
- issues common across programs;

An evaluation normally addresses the following criteria:

- Program relevance;
- Program coherence;
- Quality of teaching methods and student "*encadrement*";
- Appropriateness of resources;
- Program effectiveness;
- Quality of program management.

Additional criteria may be added as needed.

The evaluation will address the key issues and the criteria identified during the development of the Program Evaluation Plan (Section 10).

Program Evaluation Committees may modify the above criteria with the approval of the Academic Dean.

5. FREQUENCY OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

Programs will be evaluated at least every 10 years.

6. INITIATING STEPS

6.1. Informing Programs that they are scheduled for Evaluation

After the decision is made to evaluate a program, the Program Dean will be given at least six (6) months notice, usually in March or October.

6.2. Establishing a Framework

Once formal notice has been received, the Program Dean will convene the Program Committee and establish the Program Evaluation Committee with the Dean of Program Services.

Upon receipt of formal notice, the Program Evaluation Committee will convene to develop the evaluation framework.

7. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1. Dean of Program Services

7.1.1. The Dean of Program Services shall determine annually the DEC and AEC programs to be evaluated according to the conditions outlined in Section 3 and shall make a recommendation to the Academic Dean.

- 7.1.2.** When determining which programs will be evaluated, the Dean of Program Services will also determine the scope of the evaluation.

7.2. The Program Committee

The mandate of program committees includes reviewing program activities and participating in program evaluations.

7.3. The Program Evaluation Committee

7.3.1. Composition of Program Evaluation Committee

The composition of the Program Evaluation Committee includes members of the Program Committee, taking into account the following:

- the nature and size of the program; and
- the context in which the evaluation is being carried out.

To form the Program Evaluation Committee, the Program Committee shall normally be expanded to include the following seats:

- two other faculty members teaching courses in the program;
- one faculty member from a discipline not in the program, if feasible;
- one non-faculty representative external to the College;
- two non-faculty representatives from within the College, if appropriate;
- at least one student who is currently in the program;
- a graduate from the program;
- faculty representatives from those Core disciplines not normally represented on the Program Committee;
- the Program Evaluation Planner and Designer;
- the manager of the AEC programs (for the evaluation of AEC programs).

The composition of the Program Evaluation Committee will be approved by the Dean of Program Services.

The Program Evaluation Committee is chaired by the Dean of Program Services.

The Program Dean and the Dean of Program Services are non-voting members of the Evaluation Committee. The Dean of Program Services has an ex-officio, non-voting seat on each sub-committee.

7.3.2. Mandate of the Program Evaluation Committee

The Program Evaluation Committee, as set out in Section 7.1 of this policy, is responsible, in conjunction with the Evaluation Office, for the following:

- Striking relevant working committees;
- Developing and recommending an Evaluation Plan;
- Carrying out such activities as are necessary to conduct the evaluation (see Section 9);
- Developing an Evaluation Report in accordance with the Evaluation Plan; and
- Developing recommendations to the College.

8. RESEARCH ETHICS

Program evaluations will be carried out in accordance with the College's policy on Human Research Ethics. Confidential information collected as part of the evaluation process will be protected appropriately.

9. INFORMATION SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Office of Institutional Research will provide information in support of program evaluation.

10. REPORTS

10.1. Components of the Program Evaluation Plan

The Evaluation Plan will minimally contain the following:

- a list of relevant committees together with their membership;
- a statement of the purpose of the program evaluation;
- the context for the evaluation in terms of various indicators (e.g. KPI¹);
 - the basis for selection of issues (e.g. focus groups);
- a list of key issues in priority order;
 - a list of questions related to each key issue provided in an appendix;
- the criteria identified (Section 4)
- the proposed researchers and data sources;
- the critical path.

10.2. Components of the Program Evaluation Report

The Evaluation Report will minimally contain the following:

- a program description;
- the analysis of the key issues and criteria;
- an analysis of the data including a review of relevant institutional data (e.g. KPI);
- the conclusions and recommendations which flow from the report;
- a description of the evaluation process.

11. ADOPTION OF REPORTS

The evaluation plan and the evaluation report will be recommended by Senate to the Academic Dean. In the case where submission to an outside body is required, the Academic Dean will make a recommendation for approval to the Board of Governors.

12. DISSEMINATION OF REPORTS

The Dean of Program Services is responsible for making the approved report available to the Dawson College community.

13. FOLLOW-UP TO THE EVALUATION REPORT

The Academic Dean will ensure that a plan of action arising from the Evaluation Report is created and implemented.

¹ Key Performance Indicators

14. POLICY REVISION PROCEDURE

This policy will be reviewed by Senate at least every five years.

The Board of Governors is responsible for the adoption of this policy after receiving advice from Senate.

15. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

The Academic Dean is responsible for the application of this Policy.